

16| travelers. Thus in 1901-02 we were the first to explore the whole of the north Congo, which Crampel had only crossed before, and then the Dohem and Dramizama country; after us the boundary commission for the Cameroons came into a small part of the same country, and that was all. Thus a recent publication [19] gives the number of Fan warriors at about 40,000, a figure that is not even worth discussing. (1) What is certain is that the

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1. One clan, the Amvom, exceeds this figure. The Buli are larger, there are more than 400 Fan clans, at least that we know of. In terms of the official estimate each clan would have only about 100 armed men. In many cases this would barely be the number of villages.

total population of the French Congo, of which the Fan possibly compose half, may be estimated at a figure varying from three to ten million, and it is impossible to be more accurate at the present time. In my view we should estimate the Fan at five million at least, ten to twelve at the most. The Woleu basin alone, where we have determined the location of all the villages, includes more than a million Fan.

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The Fan belong to the great Bantu family, but they represent an outer link or, rather, they are situated at the boundary separating the Bantu from the populations and languages of the northeast, those of Libya, Sudan, etc. They are, as Reclus says, the least Bantu of all the Bantu.

[pp.20-377 not translated - Analyst]

Chapter XII

The Ministers of the Mvumayé

[Summary omitted. --Translator]

The mvumayé, or totem, has "rights" by the very fact of its existence.

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These rights may be summed up in the three following points: the totem has a right to ministers, to rites or a cult, to laws. These last include duties, prohibitions, and penalties. ...

The first problem that arises concerns the totem's ministers.

Who is the minister of the mvamayôh, that is, what sort of person has the right, first to choose it, then to assign it [365] either to an isolated individual or to an organized collectivity, then to decide on its cult and observances, to see that its rites are respected, to declare penalties or at least to impose them?

According to the structure of the tribe and the formation of the family ... this role falls by right to the father of a family to the exclusion of all other persons whatsoever, but the father of a family taken in the most general sense, that is, as father of a clan or, better, of a tribe.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The individual person, as a single and isolated individuality: the father of a family; the chief of a clan or tribe; the council of warriors, who have gone through initiation tests and have been admitted to the assembly that regulates vital village interests; the practitioner [feticheur] entrusted with public and recognized worship; the sorcerer [sorcier] with whom he is often confused -- these are the only distinct categories to which this role could be ascribed.

We must immediately exclude "the individual person," who has no rights over the mvamayôh, which belongs to the whole tribe and existed before him; the same applies to the clan and family totem.

[400] [Five paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [401]

... It is easy to understand that the guardians of the totem's authority, and only they, are entitled to decide where, when, how, and in what circumstances or with what preliminaries, the totem must be found. It is for them to say what marks it ought to show and for them to reject it if the necessary conditions are not existent. Finally, it is they who set up and preserve the cult and the form of ancestral traditions.

The role can only belong to the sole guardian of totemic authority, that is, to the chief or, if one prefers, to the existing esayôh, the living representative and trustee of the spirit of the founding ancestor of the tribe or clan.

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[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [402]

Sometimes in very important tribes, especially in those that make up large, compact groups, this role of minister to the mvamayôh has developed temporarily upon the practitioner.

Sometimes practitioners take on the role themselves and hold it by their personal importance or ability.

In both cases a kind of usurpation is always involved or a mixing up of powers, rarely a substitution. The practitioner then acts not in his own name by virtue of his role and his own authority, but as a delegated power. . . .

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator] [403]

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

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Thus in certain specific cases the political chief of the clan leaves the exercise of religious worship to the practitioner even with regard to the totem. Yet this is only a delegated role to the extent that when the totem has to be questioned in a critical situation, the practitioner disappears and the chief resumes his rights: it would then be up to him to carry out ritual acts and make sacrifices. A chief may not be able to do this, [404] for instance, if he were very ill. A sacrifice is then offered to the totem directly concerned. Does the practitioner now come to the fore? Not at all. He first sacrifices to the tutelary spirits and spirits of the dead, and then he interrogates the spirits in order to find out what evil influences have caused the illness and to discover the person who, in the sacred place, has "made a fetish" against the sick man. The consanguineous heir appears in his turn to invoke the family's guardian spirits in favor of the sick man and to invoke his totem. In this case, invocations and sacrifice have a dual purpose: first, to invoke the direct ancestors represented by their skulls preserved in the biéri box -- this is the cult of the esayôh; secondly, to invoke the totem represented by a real or symbolic fragment -- this is the cult of the mvamayôh.

[Four paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [405]

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There are two distinct characters: practitioner [feticheur] and sorcerer.

The practitioner takes several forms: he may be soothsayer, physician, priest -- all different manifestations of the same ministry and all legal. In a word, the practitioner is the agent of the acknowledged cult.

771 or true minister for religious life. Often, however, the practitioner actually, though not lawfully, replaces the father and especially the clan or racial chief. Alongside the practitioner, struggling against him in the background, appears the sorcerer, the agent of the extra- or contra-legal cult.

The religious act is addressed to spirits, to souls of the departed, to ancestors, to unknown forces of nature, etc. It is also addressed to the totem, as we have defined it. The totem is connected with religion by close ties which, at least for the Fan, link it inseparably with ancestor worship and determine the worshipping rites that are its due. [498]

1. Totemic Claim to Worshipping Rites

• 779 The claims of the true totem to worshipping rites is clearly defined by virtue of its being the father of the tribe and founder of the race.

In using these two words, "father" and "founder," as I have pointed out before, I in no way mean that the eponymous animal is the real father of the race, the actual progenitive founder. I am using these words as the natives do, so as to adopt their own terms. Frequently, they have been misunderstood. (1)

1. Cf. S. Reinach, Orpheus (under the word "totem"), p. 20 and passim.

Real kinship has often been confused with kinship based on sentiment, mode of speech, or custom. Moreover, some writers have been in doubt, even with firsthand evidence:

"I have never been able to ascertain from Banyoro or Baganda that their forefathers at any time believed the clan to be descended from the object chosen as a totem. The matter remains very obscure. It may be remotely connected with ancestor-worship, which is certainly the foundation of such religious beliefs as are held by the Banyoro, as by most other Negro races." (2)

2. Sir H. Johnston, The Uganda Protectorate, Preface.

779 As may be seen from these remarks of Sir Harry Johnston, the resemblance between mvamayõh and esayõh was more the consequence of a writer's preconceived idea or of a native's misinterpreted statement than of the words themselves and the crux of the matter.

What, then, are the totem's rights, according to this view of kinship: are they real in the exact sense of the word or simply the result of blood exchange?

As father of the tribe, mvamayõh, and founder of the race, the totem has a claim to a cult, and, consequently, to special rites, determining the circumstances, place, and manner of worship.

But the mvamayõh may and should be considered from two points of view: it is the protector of clan and tribe, and thereby, strictly speaking, the mvamayõh; it consequently has a right to public worship, national or tribal. But it is also the protector of the family [499] and the individual, and thereby, the ëtore; it consequently has a claim to family and individual worship. In order to apprehend and understand the significance of many totemic phenomena, it is absolutely necessary to make this distinction.

The mvamayõh therefore ought to receive ritual worship, and not just any kind; this presupposes the intervention of a practitioner representing the chief, or the head of the family or even the tribal chief. And not only does the mvamayõh have a right to collective public worship in special circumstances laid down by law, such as the establishment of a new village, but further, as ëtore, to private, individual worship, which requires the intervention of a private person and a head of a family, not of a practitioner or tribal chief.

779 But, let me emphasize that this totemic worship, whether
771 private and individual or tribal and general, does not in certain respects fit into the wider framework of religious life per se, or, if one prefers, does not constitute the religion of the nation or tribe. Indeed the practitioner is the rightful representative, guardian, and recognized sacrificial ministrant of religion, not by choice but by his function itself.

177 In totemic worship, on the other hand, which is not religion but a collection of religious phenomena, this role belongs to the family or tribal head and if, in an exceptional case, it is performed by the practitioner, he does so as a delegate only.

779 The cult of the mvamayõh is in fact a derived cult, primarily based upon the esayõh cult without which it would have no raison d'être. Indeed, the esayõh is the true father of the tribe and without the esayõh there could be no mvamayõh; one evidently cannot exist without the other. But the esayõh, or ancestral worship, is independent of what is strictly a religious cult or recognition of the divine being and worship of spirits. The esayõh cult is connected with religion per se in the sense of drawing upon it as a source and, according to the Fan, of deriving from it its ultimate origin and fundamental rationale. The esayõh cult is therefore primarily and in principle a family cult, if one takes each tribal ancestor separately. It is national if the first ancestor or ancestors of the tribe are viewed together. The cult, then, is definitely connected with the genuine religious cult of deities, [500] in the sense that in many Bantu tribes, and probably among the Fan, the first ancestor or ancestors of the tribe are now deified and raised to the rank of national gods, or at least, spiritual protectors of the tribe.

779 [777] Totemism therefore has only relative importance as a basis for Fan religious conceptions and takes, one might say, only third place, after the leading cult of spirits and then after ancestor worship, of which it is but a derivative.

Totemic rites will, as I have said, be general or particular according to whether they are connected with the mvamayõh or the etotore. The first rites relate to the race itself and what bears upon its continuance and preservation, the others relate to the individual, not as a particular person but as a member of the race. From this we come quite naturally to recognizing among them those of the family and those of society, with religion entering to a greater or lesser extent into the second.

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2. General Totemic Rites, or Rites of the mvamayi

To list and then discuss all the general rites connected directly or indirectly with Fan totemism, and those in which traces of totemism might be discovered or questioned, would carry us far beyond the necessary limits set for this study. Moreover, I shall take up later, in a work on Fan religion, those rites that are more closely connected with religious phenomena and that could not be separated without some previous explanation of the latter.

Among general totemic rites, I shall refer briefly to those that primarily concern the continuation and preservation of the race. These are:

1. Circumcision, by which a person is received into tribal life
2. Initiation, which places him among the warriors
3. Consecration of the chief, which links the tribe with its ancestors [501]
4. Warfare, which preserves the tribe
5. Hunting and fishing expeditions, which provide subsistence
6. Establishment of a new village, which is a part of the tribe's social life
7. Ordeal and the poison test, which eliminate and punish rebellion against the tribe
8. Exchange of blood, which admits a stranger into the tribe and enlarges the family or links two tribes in common alliance through the chiefs who personify them

In all general totemic rites, and often in particular ones, there are several elements to which we should first pay attention so as to avoid repetition. These are:

1. Sacrifice, which appears to be basic to all rites, general and particular
2. Fasting, which takes place before major sacrifices
3. Lustral water, which is associated with almost every sacrifice
4. Totemic dances, which are an integral part of the rites

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Of these, sacrifice is by far the most important. It is required; without it, in one form or another, there would be no rite, no cult ceremony.

I. Totemic Sacrifice

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Sacrifice is the basis of all totemism. Totemic activities, whatever they may be, depend upon sacrifice, as do all the religious activities of the African.

At first glance, there appears to be considerable variety in sacrifices. Various authors have attempted to classify them. (1)

1. Cf. Hubert and Mauss, Le sacrifice, Mélanges d'histoire des Religions [Sacrifice, Miscellany on the History of Religion] (Paris, 1909), pp. 16 ff., Lagrange, Études sur les Religions sémitiques [Studies in Semitic Religion], pp. 249; Reinach, Cultes, Mythes, Religions [Cults, Myths, Religions] Vol. 1, pp. 2-3 ff.; Bros, op. cit. [Religion des peuples non civilisés (Religion of Noncivilized People)], p. 143; Le Roy, op. cit., [La Religion des Primitifs (The Religion of Primitives), (Paris, 1909), pp. 322 ff. [502]

We shall discuss only two kinds here, without being concerned about distinctions:

1. Sacrifice to the totem
2. Sacrifice of the totem (1)

1. W. R. Smith (article on "Sacrifice" in the Encyclopædia Britannica) acknowledges sacrifice as a totemic rite; in his opinion, it is a blood covenant, a communal meal at which the faithful eat their totem god so as to assimilate his

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power, to make or renew their covenant with him. The slaughter has no other purpose except to permit communion. This is not found in all sacrifice, because, through the evolution of ideas, the notion of the "sacred" has acquired such importance that the god is merely a surviving rite, whose origin is inevitably explained by mythology.

In the view of Hubert and Mauss, sacrifice is based on belief in a vague, divine power which one can master by magical sacrifices. The purpose of sacrifice is to establish communication between the sacred world possessing these powers and the profane world, through a victim, that is, an object destroyed in the course of the ceremony. To fulfill this purpose, the victim is consecrated; by means of magic all the divine powers are concentrated in the victim and they are increased by being liberated by the immolation. The religious agent, the person offering the sacrifice, and the faithful are made partakers of this power. The victim's approach must be prepared for, hence the purifying rites.

Father Lagrange's theory acknowledges animism and gods, instead of magical forces.

a) Sacrifice of the totem

The totem is "sacred" in itself. Mvame a ne eki. It is forbidden to offend it, even in speech, and that under severe penalties, all the more so to wound and, above all, to kill it. Should this happen, the act always entails punishment and expiation, two completely separate things, to which we shall return when discussing the sacrifice made to the totem.

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How can these facts be reconciled with the sacrifice of the totem itself?

Sacrifice of a totem animal belongs to a special order of ideas. First of all, observe that we may use the term "animal." In fact, a totem is generally a living being. When this is not the case, the practitioner or religious agent of the sacrifice, the "sacrificing one," has the right to make a substitution, that is, to "animalize in another living being" the totem that is a spirit, a celestial phenomenon or a mineral, etc. [503]

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"The totem animal is the one with whom, or rather with whose tribe, a man, representing his own person and his descendants, has made a covenant, in order to obtain services in return. This agreement usually (and we have seen that this was always the case among the Fan) "was sealed by an exchange of blood in such a way that animal and man, the family of the one and of the other, the tribe uof the first and the tribe of the second, are individuals, families, or tribes of the same blood. They are allied. From time to time it is a good thing to renew this covenant, and that is done by sacrificing a representative of the animal family, a sacrifice in which man takes part as a communicant: there is a new blood exchange, a revival of the first covenant. In addition, it is a reinforcement of the special virtues of the totem, virtues which are perhaps strengthened by the presence or influence of the ancestral spirit in the animal or vegetable so consecrated, sacrificed, and eaten." (1)

1. Le Roy, op. cit., pp. 324-325.

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In what circumstances, how and why, will the totem animal be thus sacrificed? For it is probably not enough to say, with the distinguished author just quoted, "From time to time it is a good thing to renew this covenant."

There will be a sacrifice of the totem:

1. Whenever a new totem is to be chosen.

This happens, first, at each "birth" in the most inclusive sense of the word or, again, at each "beginning of a new life." Such would be the establishment of a new clan, at which time the chief's totem becomes the clan totem instead of merely the

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712 family one. Likewise, in the case of an individual, there will be sacrifice of the totem after birth, when the child has been accepted by his father and admitted for the first time into the tribe and receives his personal totem. And there will be another sacrifice of the totem upon his initiation as a warrior, his entry into a secret society, at each stage in initiation, in short, upon each change of totem or introduction to a totem.

2. Whenever the tribe, the clan, or the secret society, sometimes the family and even the individual, undergoes a critical experience [504] involving danger to life and needs to call upon totemic aid in a special way. The religious head of the group in danger, after the necessary sacrifices, will have to decide whether or not this offering and new exchange of blood is expedient.

3. In certain cases it may happen that the "materialized" totem has been lost: if, for instance, in battle or any kind of fighting, the akamfyôn, (1) the materialized totem representing

1. Akalemfyôn and akamfyôn are both used.

the actual covenant of the tribe with its real totem, falls into the enemy's hands. Sometimes the victors may even demand the surrender of the akamfyôn. Or the loss may be casual, the result of accident, shipwreck, etc. In all such cases, the akale or materialized totem will have to be replaced, whether it pertains to the nation, clan, family, or individual. The ceremony will vary in elaborateness according to the occasion or the organized group. It will not be very important when a single person is involved, but more so for a clan or tribe, and especially so when there is danger or when the totem has fallen into enemy hands.

Whatever the case may be, the ceremony follows the same broad lines. First of all, there will be an offering or sacrifice to the totem, sometimes a simple gift of fruit, oil, or first fruits, sometimes the sacrifice of an animal, occasionally even the sacrifice of a human being. We have given several

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712 examples. After the victim has been offered to the totem, the latter will itself be immolated, with all the prescribed ritual; then comes the eating or partaking of the totem itself. In this way the ancient covenant is renewed, though on a new basis. It means binding the present to the past and making certain in clear and recognizable fashion, the continuance of the totemic agreement concluded by the first ancestor of the race.

The sacrifice of the totem therefore gives us the basic idea which must have guided primitive sacrifice. First of all, it was an "offering," not a "tax" granted to a recognized master, as Le Roy puts it, for totemic sacrifice does not admit of this notion at all, but rather as the expiation of ritual but necessary murder. This notion is confirmed [505] by the fact that the sacrifice offered "beforehand" to the sacrificed totem is the same as that which ought to be offered as ritual compensation for accidental murder. The totem having been appeased in advance, the "offering" proper is then made. After a series of consecutive consecrations, the "sacrificing person," the chief or practitioner representing the organized group over which he presides, calls "into himself" the genius of the race, : the power of the ancestors. But this power rests in, and inhabits, an invisible world, the world of spirits; the actual totem must be carried into that world and put to death in order that it may penetrate it. So, before the ceremony, the "sacrificing person," as representative of that world of spirits, will take care to paint himself with liturgical colors; [with] red, the color of sacrifice, and white, the color of funerals but especially of spirits, deified souls of the dead, ghosts, of all disembodied forces.

Thus totem and victim will be adorned in the same colors, and only then will the "immolation" take place.

After the immolation comes the exchange of blood.

The totem's blood has been carefully collected; those taking part make slight incisions in their arms, squeeze out a little blood, put some on a leaf, take a few drops of the totem's blood and mix it with their own on the leaf. Finally, they apply the leaf to the cuts on their arms and rub energetically so as to make the mixture of bloods penetrate to the depths of the

719 wound. Only after this ceremony do the "participants" renew
712 their covenant by drinking the totem's blood.

"Communion" follows the exchange of blood. This does not always take place; often only the victim that has been offered is shared by everyone, after it is roasted. If the totemic animal is very small, only the future possessor of this totem will receive it as a sacrament. Sometimes, instead of communion based on the totem, the participants only divide the ashes. The totem is burnt to a cinder, but the large bones are preserved intact, pulverized and mixed with the ashes of the previous sacrifice. Then each participant carefully takes [506] the portion due him and keeps it for himself. The sacrificer's portion is always much the largest.

Finally, "substitution" of totems occasionally takes place. It may be that some kinds of totem are very hard to procure, especially in an emergency. This would be the case with a panther, an elephant, or certain rare plants. The procedure, then, is one of substitution, either by simply making a figure in clay or wood, an effigy roughly reproducing the totem, or by making merely a head. But with this image the consecrator will use the same formulae and ritual and will represent symbolically those that cannot actually be performed, like blood exchange. The effigy is always first painted with the symbolic colors, then, after an offering is made, sprinkled with the victim's blood.

b) Sacrifice to the totem

These are of various kinds.

German writers often place sacrifices in different categories, such as expiation (Sühnopfer), thanksgiving (Dankopfer), and petition (Bittopfer). This division is more specious than real, at least as far as totemic sacrifice is concerned. Therefore, with Max Müller [Footnote omitted. --Editor], I prefer to look upon them as regular and occasional sacrifices.

Occasional sacrifices I consider, with Mauss [Footnote omitted. --Editor], to be, first, the sacramental sacrifices associated with the solemn events of life, votive sacrifices, and finally curative and expiatory sacrifices.

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78 Regular or periodic sacrifices are associated with certain fixed occasions, independent of man's will and of chance. These are: the daily sacrifice, that to the new moon, and that of first fruits.

Occasional sacrifices are usually blood offerings, accompanied by rites that have earned the name "communional."

[507] In almost all these, there is communion through the victims, and all present partake in the sacrifice.

Periodic totemic sacrifices are, on the other hand, rarely bloody or "communional."

In general, the African considers his own interests first. He usually pays rather little attention to his totem, except for certain rites laid down by custom, from which he would not dare to deviate. Thus, every morning, the first wife or most important woman, in the name of the head of the family, anoints with oil the figure upon the box (*évara bîéri*) that contains both the ancestral skulls and the materialized totem. Also, at the time of the new moon, an offering is made to this same Bîéri, to the ancestors and totem together, the two cults being united in a common gift.

But when a Fan has some favor to ask, wants to acquire something, like a wife, an object, etc., he will hasten to make a sacrifice to the totem. The more urgent the need, and the more important the object, the more substantial will be the sacrifice, ranging from a hen to a human victim, sometimes even to the ritual sacrifice of the chief himself or at least of one of his children.

The sacrifice of thanksgiving does not exist for the Fan; he would view it as "give and take" and he would be astonished if asked to give thanks; he has offered a sacrifice to his totem, the latter has granted his prayer, which means that the totem is satisfied. Why do any more? If a new need arises, then only will it be time to have recourse again to his totem. Meanwhile he had best leave things alone. Each is satisfied with the other.

As for expiatory sacrifice, it is one of the most common. Every time an African has an accident, a misfortune, a calamity, perhaps merely lack of success, he attributes it to his totem's

● 779 having been offended by some oem or ritual impurity, by the
782 violation of an eki, etc., whence the necessity of appeasing the
totem. The greater the misfortune, the more serious must have
been the cause or the fault, even though involuntary, and the
more to be expiated by a larger sacrifice. [508]

At the basis of all general rites concerned with the race,
we find sacrifice in one form or another, either bloody "com-
munional," or bloody and not "communal," or not bloody,
or simply as an offering.

In these sacrifices the victim is often the totem itself.
But in that case there will always have been a previous offering
of another victim. That victim may sometimes be the officiant
himself, as in circumcision, when the sacrificer or operator is
but an agent.

II. Lustral Water; médaim akum

179 In almost all totemic sacrifices, lustral water is used. The
782 practitioner boils water in a clay pot, making an infusion with
783 various plants. The most commonly used are: ava, a sort of
[824] fragrant labiate; ashp, a strong-smelling mint; erun (hus
gabonensis), a tree with a garlicky smell; eshp (monodora
myristica), with an equally strong scent; and in addition, the
leaves of elun, ombien, and several others. Nearly always
eleven plants are used, which must have been picked at the
new moon. To these are added a few pieces of meteorite and
the remains of a sacrifice offered to the tribal totem, consisting
of ashes, bone, and a few bits of horn or hoof, also a little dried
blood.

Before beginning, the practitioner or head of the family
dips his hands in the lustral water. With this he sprinkles the
participants, using a dt, (1) a kind of fly swatter usually made

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1. The dt is the insignia of chiefs. In former times, only they were allowed to use an elephant's tail as a fly swatter, when they themselves had killed the animal.

779 from an elephant's tail. He then sprinkles the victim, the
782 ancestral skulls, and finally the totem.

783 Upon returning from battle, warriors wash their weapons
in lustral water so as to ward off the malevolent spirits of the
dead.

Lustral water is also used in sacrifices made in expiation
of violations of éké.

124] Afterwards the water is emptied in a remote spot. The
chief often carries it back to the village and uses it to water the
tree, usually a fig tree, that was planted over the remains of his
umbilical cord. This tree is an emblem of his own life, and the
lustral water is in this case a sort of sacrifice. [509]

III. Fasting: nsé albu

779 All important totemic ceremonies are preceded by fasts.
785 They are very strict, and the least infraction entails grave
penalties.

They always take place in seclusion: those who are fasting
are kept apart in the forest far from the village, shut up in small
huts. During the fast it is strictly forbidden to drink or eat before
sundown and to wash with water, although rubbing one's body
with ashes is allowed. Furthermore, certain meats and fruits
are prohibited, such as boiled food or fruit; fermented drinks,
except on certain sacred days and before initiations, when, on
the contrary, it is obligatory; and drinking from any kind of pot.
If someone takes a drink inadvertently, the pot must be broken
right away; nevertheless this act involves a ritual fault and re-
quires expiation. One is supposed to drink from a brook, using
a leaf rolled into a cone (ohé éssaga). Finally, throughout the
fast all intercourse with women is absolutely prohibited (évek).

779 The duration of the fast varies with the ceremony and the
785 initiation. For circumcision, for instance, it lasts usually a
lunar month (ngon). Other initiations rarely exceed seven days,
821 let us say a lunar quarter, aléé ngon; the last quarter is usually
chosen (mété méngon). The moon plays an important role in all

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821 totemic ceremonies, or in even just religious ones. None may be performed while the moon is dark or when it is full (ngun fo ndugu: the moon is closed). In the ceremonies at which the chief performs alone, the fast lasts three and a half days, a half lunar quarter; the fast begins at nearly full moon (ndu ngun) and ends at full moon (ndugu ngun).

IV. Totemic Dances: ndrem be ndrem akhu

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535 Dance plays such a large part in Fan life, as it does in that of every African, that it would be very unlikely to be absent from religious and totemic life. Besides, we know that dancing has always been associated with [516] religious phenomena among all peoples and in all epochs. David danced before the Ark of the Covenant; Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans had their sacred dances; and even in our day, in quite recent times, have we not seen in Madrid the seises, the altar boys of Seville, performing their graceful dances before the blessed sacrament?

The Fan have their religious dances, and special ones for each rite. We may divide them into several classes: purely religious dances, with which we are not concerned; those that accompany totemic rites; and, finally, purely totemic dances.

Among the dances accompanying totemic rites, the principal ones are dances of sacrifice and of circumcision and mortuary dances.

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535 As the name indicates, dances of sacrifice accompany all sacrifices and are danced before and after, and each has its characteristic features.

The dance taking place before a sacrifice is serious. The chief, then all the participants, circle slowly around the victim to a tom-tom beating out a solemn rhythm. The movements of this dance are all slow and restrained, knees are bent slightly, elbows pushed back, with hands near the hips. It is more a rhythmic march than a true dance.

The dance taking place after a sacrifice is of quite another character. The rhythm is very fast, arms are raised into the air,

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legs are flung to right and left alternately; two very lively steps, a pause, two successive leaps to the right and left, and a swaying of the body above the hips make up this dance, which has real beauty and does not lack a certain style.

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The circumcision dance is entirely different. The young candidates, painted white from head to foot and dressed in garments of leaves, are led by the initiator before the assembled participants, as soon as the preparatory rites have ended and the operation is to be performed. Grown, circumcised men stand on one side, the ritual experts in the middle, those to be circumcised [511] on the other side. The dance begins. First of all, it consists of an immense circle, which spreads out and turns around the area; then the movement quickens, hands are dropped, and each person leaps and shimmies about on his own, still keeping time, which is marked out by the tom-tom. Moreover, in spite of what appears to be disorder, one soon sees that all movements are regular, perfectly conceived and executed without a hitch, without mistake, without getting out of step. Soon sweat is pouring down the dancers' arms and legs; one after another they go back to their places; only the candidates continue and their dance turns into a spinning in almost one place, on the toes, with hands stretched horizontally. Then, suddenly, at a signal from the tom-tom, the dance stops abruptly: the young dancers rush to their places, sit down, and the operation begins.

Each time the practitioner circumcises a boy, he stands up, holding in his hand proof of the operation, then does a quick dance step consisting of a few merry leaps, to the accompaniment of a special song, which everyone sings together.

When the operations are over, the youths who have been circumcised perform a short dance intended to show their fortitude; it is of just a few steps, done any old way. Then the boys quickly return to their huts, held up by their friends.

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The funeral dance is much more beautiful. Far from being dignified and solemn, the fanki is exceedingly lively and complicated, representing, theoretically, the soul of the dead man leaving his body and later reaching the world of spirits.

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535 The soul looks everywhere for a new dwelling; it is repulsed on all sides, but at last finds its rightful place. This dance has only a distant connection with totemic performances and so we do not need to be concerned with it.

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535 Genuinely totemic dances are infrequent and are only performed on important occasions, such as war and above all after a victory. However, they are also part of burial rites and are put on after the fanki at the death of a chief. [512]

The totemic dance expresses the link between the head [chef] of the race and his totem. It depicts the totem, sometimes in a symbolic, sometimes in a representational, manner. If, as often happens, the totem is an animal, the dance will be really lively; these are the finest examples. In addition, the dancer's talent should go to copying as closely as possible the animal's pace, habits, way of life, in a word, to mime it as accurately as possible.

I have seen some of these totemic dances performed with extraordinary skill. Out of many occasions, there was once one, among the Yemvi, whose totem is a kind of flower called mviv; the dancer, moving to a very fast tempo, first outlined the shape of the flower, imitated its appearance by gestures, by an extraordinary swaying of the hips, which involved sometimes bending so far backward that his head would touch the ground without for a second losing the rhythm; from time to time, his arms and head would sweep the ground to the right and the left with incredible swiftness. Then came the blossoming; growth from bud to flower, soon to full bloom. Finally he portrayed the symbolic covenant between the father of the race and the flower, which was brought to him by a spirit. The same dancer presented a really striking contrast between the slow, weighed down, ponderous bearing of the racial chief and the light, elusive, airy, as it were, movements of the spirit approaching, retreating, and approaching again. This entirely symbolic dance has sometimes been quite erroneously interpreted by explorers as being erotic.

When the totem is an animal, the dance is obviously much simpler and more representational. The dancer mimes an animal

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535 that everyone will recognise by its gait, pace and typical mannerisms; then, one by one, he will act out scenes of pursuit and capture, of alliance, finally of actual assistance. Some dances thus acquire a great reputation, which they certainly deserve.

These totemic dances have much in common with certain character dances at which the African excels, representational dances. For example, I remember having seen the dance of the bees, of the wild boar, and of the elephant, done with truly remarkable agility and realism.

Totemic dances are distinguished above all by the fact that they are accompanied, one might say rhythmically measured, by the totemic song. Furthermore, while character dances depend to a great extent upon the dancer's inspiration, totemic dance steps are more regulated and have certain invariable features. [513]

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831 A common trait of all religious dances is decency, at least relative decency. They are performed only by men, and women are not admitted except at circumcisions, and even then they do not mingle with the men. There is rarely any sex in them, in contrast to the purely recreational dances, especially those performed in the evening, at which at times license seems to be given to the greatest obscenity.

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834 Religious dances always have a very marked quality of antiquity, and the majority are very beautiful, in the precise meaning of the word.

In order to give an approximate idea of totemic dances, I have transcribed two of them which seem the most expressive, that of the flower, mvi, and that of the elephant, nzoŋ.

These dances are sung, danced, and mimed at the same time. Each note represents a tom-tom beat, a different bodily position and foot movement, whether a glissade, a leap, a heavy beat, or a rapid weaving in and out.

Totemic dance of the mvi flower:
Musical score, pp. 513-514 of text.]

[515] 3. General Totemic Rites: Details

779 In order to establish some logical order for totemic rites, we may take a man at his coming into the world, follow him through his principal activities, and leave him only at death. In this way we shall include the complete series of general or particular rites which he must observe. However, we shall obviously have to discuss them from the totemic point of view only.

By general rites I mean those concerned with the race or tribe. Among particular rites, on the other hand, I place all those concerned more specifically with the individual.

General rites are as follows:

1. Circumcision, akele
2. Initiation, evôm
3. Consecration of a chief, elôga
4. War, abal
5. Hunting or fishing expeditions, miyên
6. Establishment in new territory, edzal mfifi
7. Ordeals, elun, ênû mélan
8. Covenants or blood exchange, abvuna

Particular rites to be noted are:

1. Birth and name giving, abiêné, edzû
2. Adoption, añôn moñé
3. Marriage, alux
4. Hunting, fishing, farming, mveñe, ayû kos, bifañ
5. Trade, okira
6. Death, awu

The totemic character is sometimes strongly marked in these rites, sometimes it is almost obscured, barely perceptible. At times that character is underlined merely by a gesture, a call, a prayer. But it is never absent. [516]

I. Circumcision

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304 Circumcision cannot be considered a universal rite among Bantu tribes: some practice it, some do not, either because they have never done so or because the custom has been lost in the course of centuries and repeated migrations.

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de l'Arabie [Description of Arabia] and Winer say); and from the point of view of sexual activity, it has no effect upon a man's potency; hygienically, circumcision is insufficiently effective." Colonial Despatch, Medical Report, Sept. 3, 1907.

I should also say, with Father Lagrange -- adding to circumcision the tribal mutilations to be discussed, such as the knocking-out or filing of teeth, scarifications, etc. -- "the religious character of these ceremonies cannot any longer be disputed."

b) Is circumcision a totemic rite?

Granted that circumcision is a religious rite, is it also a totemic one?

According to Frazer, (1) circumcision is part of the initiation rites.

1. Totemism, p. 47

tion rites that link a youth with his tribe and his god; these initiations have a specific character, that of uniting the young man and the animal life of the totem through an exchange of souls. (2)

2. In Australia the neophyte is anointed with blood drawn from a warrior's arm or may even drink some of it. A few magical passes are added, which convey to the candidate the corresponding spiritual powers and gifts. He must sleep on the tombs of his ancestors so as to absorb their virtues. Sometimes he is reputedly killed by a certain Thurembul, who returns him to life, and removes one of his teeth. In this, says Frazer, there may have been an idea of

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rebirth, or of the neophyte's starting a second life; that is why he acquires a new name as soon as he is circumcised, or when the tooth is removed or when he sheds the blood of his family.

I am quite ready to admit with Father Lagrange that circumcision is not restricted to totemic tribes. Among fully totemic tribes, like the Baganda, it is not only not permitted but is even viewed with disgust. [519] I look upon it as basically a religious rite, derived from ancestor worship, and what Frazer says confirms me in this opinion. Nevertheless, I freely admit and even believe that alongside these rites connecting circumcision with ancestor worship there are others, which, coming from the same source, also connect circumcision with the totemic cult; for in many religious phenomena the mvamayôn cult and that of the esayôn are closely and inseparably related.

In outlining below the practice of circumcision among the Fan, we shall point to the rites that derive from the mvame. Our reply to the initial question will then be:

Circumcision among the Fan is certainly a religious rite; it is not a purely totemic phenomenon, but the totem enters into it.

Bros agrees with these conclusions, at least in part. In his opinion, circumcision is a test of puberty, a first-fruits offering to the gods, a purification made to release an evil spirit which vanishes with the blood: above all, it is a pact by which a part of one's blood is given to the tribal god (1) and

1. In my opinion, the term "tribal god" ought not to be used; the Bantu tribes recognize only a single Creator, under different names, and not a god for each tribe.

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● one thereby becomes incorporated in him and in the tribe. Finally, the taboo surrounding this organ of the body, to which the origin of circumcision may be traced -- either because of the social function of the organ or of the danger of its premature use, or even because of its independence of volition -- allows circumcision to be considered as a desecration that has to precede the stage of virility, in order that use may be made of it. (2)

2. Bros, Religion des peuples non-civilisees [Religion of Non-civilized Peoples], "Circoncision" [Circumcision].

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[844] Some of these statements hold good for the Fan; some are less applicable. Let me use as an example one of the things that illustrates very well the close connection between circumcision as a religious rite and childbirth rituals, the fact that pieces of cloth used to staunch blood are in both cases carefully kept to be used for the same purpose. [520]

Ordinary warriors place them with their personal totem in the mfek or pineapple-fiber bag which never leaves them. These pieces of cloth, or fragments of them, are always part of totemic sacrifices. The sons of chiefs, on the contrary, are not allowed to keep them; they bury them deep at the base of the sacred fig tree planted when they were born over the remains of the umbilical cord. This custom certainly goes back to remote antiquity. Among the Egyptians, the fig tree was considered sacred and dedicated to the Egyptian Venus, Hathor. From this perhaps comes the word éthu, designating a garment made from the bast of the fig tree. The same word, éthu, has remained in the Fan language with the same meaning, "garment," and the inland Fan always make vegetable-fiber cloth from the fig tree, which they still dye red; this was formerly the color dedicated to Hathor, and it has remained the color of betrothal garments. For the same reason, before marriage, young men and women stain themselves red from head to foot. It is a color "set apart."

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c) The Circumcision Itself

The Fan use the term akéla for circumcision, at least as regards boys. The root of the word is clearly in the verb ekèl, of which the radical element expresses the idea of "cutting" and "removing." For girls the word atsingéla is used, which denotes at once ligature, extension, and excision.

We shall examine:

- 1) The phenomenon itself
- 2) The age of the candidate
- 3) The operation
- 4) The participants -- patient and operator
- 5) The instrument

1) The phenomenon itself

Circumcision is universal throughout the Fan nation and no male is exempt. Besides, he would be disgraced, and he would not be able to enter into marriage without having first had this operation. Even children brought up in missions do not escape; as soon as they go back to their villages, [521] they submit with good grace if they have remained uncircumcised.

If old people are questioned about the "why" of the ceremony, it is hard to get an answer from them, and they nearly always fall back on custom, "We've always done it," or propriety, "It's better that way." Both answers, especially the second, are of real value. Yet one day I got a much more interesting reply from a chief in the interior, who told me, "It marks the beginning." And when I insisted on further explanation, he replied, "It is the mark that sanctifies manhood; afterwards one is no longer an animal, one is 'sacred.'" ("E ne ndem ošu, ndem a bo fam: ni vale, tsit é séra, mur a ne éki," lit., "It is the mark of the first beginning, the mark which sanctifies virility; after the operation, the animal has disappeared, and there is a man, and he is sacred.") As the chief did not want to say anything more, he fell back upon the rules of secrecy. It was difficult, if not impossible, in the tribe with which I then was, to attribute a Christian or Moslem origin to this reply; the chief has never heard of either of them. It would be much simpler to

881 look at it as a vestige of primitive tradition.

304 To the Fan mind, circumcision is altogether a religious,
779 never a secular, act; everything that I shall have to say about it
will illustrate this further.

2) The age of circumcision

The age at which Fan boys are circumcised usually varies from seven to ten. I have never seen a baby circumcised. However, there is nothing prescribed by law or custom on this point. Yet in the interior, the age of ten is far exceeded, and it is not unusual for the operation to take place between sixteen and twenty. Old men are unanimous in saying that this was the ancient custom, and that the time for the operation was made earlier in recent times because of the many casualties that occurred. It is impossible to determine precisely what they mean by "recent times." However, according to all the evidence I could gather, one should hardly go back [522] more than 200 to 300 years, that is, to the time of the great Fan migrations. We can see how unlikely it would have been during that period of confusion to perform the operation successfully at so late an age.

Formerly, circumcision must have closely preceded entering the warrior stage. Certain Fan songs seem to indicate this, and many African tribes have preserved the custom.

All the children of a village are circumcised at the same time at the tribal chief's command; the operation only takes place at certain times, when there appear to be enough children, yearly in some villages, at longer intervals in small ones.

[291] Until circumcision, children may go naked; afterwards a bit of cloth bark of the fig tree will always be worn.

881 The seven-to-ten-year limit is appreciably exceeded in
304 the following case: a father may, out of pride, make a solemn
779 vow to his akaméyôn that his son will not be circumcised until
782 he [the son] has killed an enemy. Under those conditions the youth may go naked for a long time; nor can he have any relations with a woman or even live with the one his father may have bought for him as a future wife. Consequently, he will

881 do all he can to end this state. As soon as he has killed an
304 enemy, he hurries with the victim's hand to his father. Cir-
779 cumcision then solemnly takes place before all the warriors, and
782 his marriage is celebrated as soon as the wound has healed.

3) Time of the ceremony

881 The chief first decides upon the date, which is almost
304 invariably in the eight days before a full moon.
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As soon as the chief has announced that circumcision will shortly take place, he indicates all the children who are to be included; they, under his direction, go off into the forest not far from the village. After a large space has been cleared, they build open little huts or mere shelters, where they live all together.

[342] Their food is left at the beginning of the path leading to the huts, for no one is supposed to approach; access [523] is above all strictly forbidden to women. The food is plentiful, and nothing must be thrown away or hidden; everything must be eaten, and the chief supervises this rigorously. (1)

1. One of our missionaries observed the same custom among the more advanced populations of the interior. He even mentions this fact: the rule is so strict that one of the candidates was forced three times in succession to swallow the food that his stomach persistently rejected.

4) Preparations

[351] All around the place where the boys are confined, a fence of reeds (1) is erected, which no one dares jump over. This seclusion

1. The place of circumcision shows well enough that the rite is like a consecration, by blood sacrifice, of the sexual life to which the young man is thereafter admitted. Lagrange, op. cit., p. 244.

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does not usually last longer than eight days, a lunar quarter. Every evening songs and dances are performed in honor of the moon, which is looked upon as a source of fertility. (2) In Fan,

2. The same belief exists in almost all African tribes; just as in Egypt, the moon presides over rain, which is the earth's source of fertility and thus of human fertility.

[533] the same word, ngon, denotes "girl" and "moon," an ambiguity to be found nearly everywhere among African tribes, in varying degrees. These songs and dances are very special and repetition of them is strictly prohibited outside the sacred enclosure. (3)

3. All I could discover on the subject from my young Christian converts who had already gone through the ceremony was that these songs were "bad" and had as their purpose procreation. There is no doubt that the Fan say things "crudely" in their songs. That is all I can say.

According to Lang, (4) this is the time when a youth is

4. The Making of Religion, Art.: "Circumcision."

taught about the existence of a beneficent god, a defender of morals, who condemns egoism and adultery. This is so among the Fan. In fact, it is during their retreat the chief teaches the children the mébara, or wisdom of the ancestors, and narrates the great deeds of the race. This is as much as we have been able to learn, for the rule of secrecy is scrupulously observed. During the final days the chief makes a point of mixing into the

881 During the final days the chief makes a point of mixing into the
304 boys' food certain aphrodisiac stimulants, cardamon seeds [524]

● 779 (Amomum citriodorum), a wonderful red fruit (Lavigeria), and
832 onzakôn (Antrocaryon klaineianum) which, apart from these oc-
824 casions, only women may eat. They are even forbidden to say
the name of that tree, because the word nkôn denotes the male
genital organ; they must say onzabili, the onza tree. In addi-
tion the fruit of the onzakôn has a slight resemblance to a
phallus.

881 Throughout their seclusion the children sleep stretched out
304 on the ashes of the hearths. They must tell the chief what they
779 have dreamt about; the family totem ought, in fact, to re-
828 veal itself to them at this time. Since the chief speaks to the
children frequently and since they know that they are supposed
to have the totem in mind, the suggestion, intimate and strange
at the same time, leads easily to the desired result. If, how-
ever, a different object from the family totem, animal or other,
appears more vividly and repeatedly in their imaginations, it
would be a sign that the totemic guardian spirit wants to adopt
another medium and, consequently, the child's totem, if he
has a personal one, has to be changed.

5) The ceremony

881 On the day of the operation, the practitioner, who has
304 been forewarned, goes to the enclosure, accompanied by the
779 fathers. Each child is questioned in turn; then there is a big
dance performed in honor of the ancestors and guardian spirits
of the clan. Each head of the family has brought along his
mvamayôn and now explains it to the child. A new dance is
done after this initiation. Each father then stretches his son
out on the ground, sits down beside him, and slips his legs be-
neath the child's body in such a way as to raise the middle of
the body. The practitioner has a knife in hand kept specially
for this purpose and carefully wrapped in a little sheath. The
[43] knife used to be made of stone, but that kind has become very
rare. Knives are now usually made of copper and are curiously
worked, one end being beak shaped, the other pointed; they
are not hafted. These knives are called ekelokên.

881 The practitioner operates quickly, assisted by the chief of
 304 the tribe. Before operating on each child, he hands the knife
 779 [525] to the chief, without a word, and the latter accepts it,
 also in silence, without saying the usual "thank you" or "very
 good," abora or mvè.

With girls none of these ceremonies are observed. An experienced matron performs the operation, usually when the child is very young. It is nevertheless a religious act, accompanied by songs and dances, but since only women are present, it was impossible for me to learn the slightest detail.

The tribal chief immediately returns the knife to the practitioner, saying, "Take it and do what has to be done." (Nôñe n'èbo dzam ma yia n'èbo, lit., "Take it so as to do the deed which 'I' ought to do.") This proves that the practitioner is but the chief's delegate. Usually it is the latter who holds the penis firmly. First of all, the father pulls out the foreskin as far as possible and ties it with a bit of string. The penis, thus prepared, is then stretched out on a special board, and the practitioner cuts quickly. This is the most painful part of the operation. Ashes are then rubbed on the open wound. The head of the family carefully collects the blood, which will constitute a powerful fetish after it has been offered in sacrifice to the mvamayôn and to the ancestors.

It is a point of honor for the children not to cry out, no matter what the pain. Besides, the pain must be very much lessened by the fact that the chief squeezes the flesh firmly and the operator works quickly. As soon as it is over, the child is taken to be bathed and is then laid on a bed of ashes. His scanty clothing is removed, if that has not already been done during the preceding days, and he is now dressed in a loose garment or a belt from which hangs a thick pad of raffia fiber or thin strips of finely cut banana tree bark, so as to protect him from being hurt. After the operation every father offers the practitioner a present, often a sheep or at least several hens. The latter then, according to the customary rites, offers one of the sheep to the spirits and has part of it burnt. The ashes of the sacrifice, mixed with the collected blood, will constitute the child's fetish. Anything left over is carefully buried in a place

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apart, and everyone then avoids letting them be seen. [526]
The rest of the sheep is eaten by the children the next day.

They remain in seclusion for a few more days. 'At the end there is another ceremony, also accompanied by dances and songs. They show the reassembled heads of families that the operation has been successful. They then remove the circumcision belt, put back the ordinary loincloth, and return to the village, where they are feted.

d) The consequences of circumcision

"Everything that has to do with procreation," writes Father Lagrange (1) of these ceremonies (and I quite agree with his

1. Études sur les religions sémitiques

[Studies in Semitic Religion], pp. 244 ff.

conclusions), "is eminently taboo, surrounded with restrictions and precautions imbued with a religious character and sanctioned by strict laws. Through circumcision a person is really affianced by blood. This may perhaps have been one condition which entitled the begotten child to become in turn a member of the both national and religious association, the community." (We have just seen that this is definitely so among the Fan, for an uncircumcised boy would neither be admitted to the first initiation tests for warriors nor be able to marry: both tribe and future wife would be opposed to it.) "Every time blood is shed, one might wonder whether it is in order to make use of its intrinsic power, in the sense of magic, or for expiation, or to link one person to another by exchange of blood and vitality. Here it would seem to be a question of union, since the rite is initiatory: life is to be transmitted by an organ linked to god through blood letting; at the same time, it represents the ending of a very sensible taboo, which saves the youth from premature indulgence, comparable to that which protects growing fruits and cereals and which ends with the first-fruits sacrifice."

Mgr. Le Roy (1) differs somewhat from Father Lagrange

1. La religion des primitifs [The Religion of Primitive Peoples], pp. 235 ff.

881 on the subject of circumcision: "Circumcision, in our view, is
304 connected with the institution of the taboo; it was originally the
779 lifting of a prohibition. Before having gone through this ceremony, a young man cannot marry; he is not acceptable [527] to any woman and he has no right to nuptial relations. And if these should nevertheless, occur -- and they do! -- the child of this forbidden intercourse is accounted 'bad' and must disappear."

848 Among the Fan such a child, without being considered exactly "bad," is thought of as not belonging to the tribe. Since the father has not the right to be a father, he cannot give the child a name; and if the child escapes the first vicissitudes of babyhood, it will soon die of neglect and hunger, scorned by all. This is especially the case with mulattoes, whose birth in itself places them outside the tribe. They are found on the coast and near European settlements, where, along with the decline in moral standards, the family has to a great extent disappeared, with the laws that used to guarantee its integrity and corresponding moral code. In the interior, in spite of the passage of numerous traders and explorers whose morals are no better than those of the coast, mulattoes are very rare, to say the least. We have just given the reason for this.

000 "Here," continues Mgr. Le Roy, "we have a typical and interesting illustration of the principle set forth above. The transmission of human life takes place in a mysterious realm where the activity of the Lord of Creation is manifest, or at least taken for granted, and to which man cannot be admitted except by a sort of authorization from God and with the help of an appropriate ceremony. At the indicated time the prohibition may be removed, but as always in such cases the 'use permit' must be bought back by a blood sacrifice, hence circumcision, the moral purpose of which is obvious, because the taboo or prohibition that it ends is a rigorous obstacle to sexual relations between children who have not reached puberty.

"This institution can be found everywhere; to be so widespread it must have a widely applicable raison d'être; this is

000 none other than the sacred prohibition in the interest of the family's moral welfare, which is lifted, when necessary, in the same interests."

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179 Circumcision for Mgr. Le Roy is, therefore, in short, only "the lifting of a prohibition in the interest of family welfare." [528]

Although this explanation is neat and seems to satisfy all requirements, it still does not appear to me altogether correct. It takes the effect for the cause. Undoubtedly, a lifting of a prohibition in the interest of family welfare does follow circumcision, but the lifting, and the prohibition itself, seems to me very much an effect, a consequence, not the cause, and I believe that the objective is above all the sacrifice, admittedly a sacrifice for the welfare of the race. As Father Lagrange points out, "this system" (initiations, tests, and especially circumcision) "implies a close religious relationship within a social group at a low stage of development. It would seem to be a matter of religious unity. In the great Assyro-Babylonian civilization, there is no evidence of circumcision, but then, as now, among widely scattered peoples, some had adopted it, some had not." Is it then enough to say, as for the Bantu tribes, that those who no longer have it have either abandoned it or never possessed it? If in fact all Bantu tribes come from a single stock, as we believe, all have been familiar with circumcision, and we are dealing with a much more ancient rite.

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881 We have already mentioned the Egyptian infiltration into Fan manners and customs and the influence of their beliefs. Therefore circumcision might go back to them. Herodotus had already pointed out that circumcision came from Egypt and had, by way of Egypt, spread throughout the Mediterranean world (Her. II, 104). "It may well be," writes Father Lagrange on this subject, "that circumcision among Egyptians was not exactly borrowed from an ethical system, but was a tradition from their origins, going back to the time when they started coming down the Nile Valley, according to contemporary opinion.

177 We also find the tradition among the Arabs as far back in their
304 history as we can go."
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Therefore -- and Johnston is of the same opinion -- cir-
cumcision is not a rite devised to meet specific needs but one
that dates back to the origins of the human race. From the
beginning, man has offered first fruits to God. From this to
offering the first fruits of human beings and of life, the step was
inevitable, and it was quickly made. [529]

304 In the Fan group at least, circumcision is thus based upon
881 the idea of sacrifice itself and not, as Mgr. Le Roy says, upon
779 the simple lifting of a prohibition that is very useful and very
moral. It is based not only on the idea of sacrifice itself but
on that of an offering by desecration, which is the very founda-
tion of sacrifice. "Especially at the first use of things it is im-
portant to give the gods their share," to renew the covenant
with the Master of life. From the beginning, man presented
the "first fruits" of things to the deity, above all in order to
truly acknowledge his realm. Is not man's life that which is
most precious? And the basis of life is certainly the procreative
act. Furthermore, the basic concept of clan and tribe is based
on the family, so that again from that point of view, procreation
is the most important act of life. It is the first fruits of the
generative process that will be offered to the Lord of the clan
and to the ancestors, deified or not, but supposedly standing by.
Therefore this will be a religious act, carried out by the prac-
titioner with the help of the tribal chief and the head of the
family, that is, the three clan authorities. So that the cere-
mony may be more solemn, the remains of the ancestors and of
the eponymous animal will be included; finally, as in every
sacrifice, blood will be shed. These terms make the sacrifice
totemic.

But so that the first fruits may be pure and the shed blood
acceptable and effective, they must be truly first fruits. It is
therefore very important that they be preserved as such; the
means is simple and effective and consists of the éki, that is,
the prohibition of certain foods and especially of sexual relations
before the set time. The law is not even concerned with the

881 "fruit" that might result from transgressing the prohibition. The
 304 fault, nsem, must be expiated ritually as a fault, but the law
 779 would not consider the child as "bad" or guilty; the law does
 not take it into account at all, but ignores it: the child is "out-
 side the law," res nullius, and is not killed but left to die. It is
 therefore important that they be really first fruits. Then, too,
 when the appointed time comes, when a Fan begins to feel
 himself ready to procreate in his turn, when he can take his
 place along with the young warriors, the sacrifice will be per-
 formed with all formality; once this has been accomplished,
 [530] but only then, will the prohibition be lifted. The sacrifice
 ought to be not only carried out but accepted too, because
 if, for one reason or another -- and this happens -- after circum-
 cision has been performed according to the rules, the practitioner
 still considers that the spirits of the real or totemic ancestors are
 not satisfied, an additional sacrifice will be necessary in order
 to make the first acceptable.

Thus it is clear in what ways our notion of circumcision
 differs considerably from that of Mgr. Le Roy. In his opinion,
 it consists of the lifting of a prohibition in the interest of the
 family's moral welfare a "use permit," that must be bought
 back by a sacrifice; in our opinion, in agreement with Father
 Lagrange's, the lifting of the prohibition is not the cause but a
 natural consequence. The prohibition's objective is circum-
 cision, the "use permit" is the inevitable result, not the cause,
 of the sacrifice, and circumcision (1) is the very sacrifice of the

1. Lagrange, Études sur les religions
sémitiques [Studies in Semitic Religion],
 "Le Sacrifice" [Sacrifice], pp. 255 ff.

procreative first fruits, the most important act from the point of
 view of clan unity and the perpetuation of the family.

II. Initiation

The second totemic rite that we come upon in the life of
 a Fan youth is his initiation.

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884 This rather complicated rite includes, first, the tests I have already mentioned, which make a warrior of the young man, then initiation into the rites, and finally the consecration of weapons.

The young warrior's years of childhood and adolescence have been entirely carefree and completely outside any religious cult. He may have just been taught the name of his personal totem, and perhaps not even that. All he knows is that he is forbidden under rather severe penalties to do certain things, to eat certain kinds of food. He observes these prohibitions rigidly, because he is sure that any infringement will be immediately punished, for isolated éki are never pardoned and must always be expiated. [531]

a) Tests

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626 When he has reached the age for taking his place among the warriors, a young man has first of all to undergo tests designed to show his strength and courage. Severe as they may be very few youths evade them. Besides, it would mean utter dishonor, and the young man who out of weakness or cowardice is either overcome by or doesn't dare face them, would have no choice but to exile himself. This does happen, though rarely, and especially among those few young people who have grown up from childhood as servants of the Europeans. The Fan stigmatize them by a special phrase meaning "men-women good-for-any-thing," and this expression tells a great deal about the special role they play and the peculiar morals of too many Europeans.

b) Initiation into rites

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884 After he has passed these preliminary tests, a young man undergoes totemic initiation along with initiation into the ancestor cult. He is first taught the name of the family, clan and tribal totem. For this purpose, on a day chosen as favorable by the practitioner during the initiation already described above, the candidate is conducted in front of a sort of platform covered with dry leaves. First of all, the head of the family brings his évora biéri, which, as we know, encloses the ancestral skulls and the materialized totem. The neophyte will learn to distinguish the various objects and to identify the different skulls without a moment's hesitation being permitted.

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718 Only then will he be allowed to know about the laws and rights of the totem. He will then receive his personal totem, as we have described it, will make it the prescribed sacrifice, and will preciousely keep the remains of this offering on his own person, enclosed in an antelope horn. Already as a child he wore this horn which now contain the ashes of this sacrifice; it used merely to hang around his neck on a cord or, more often, before his genital organs. After the youth becomes a warrior, he hangs the horn among the other fetishes attached to a leather baldrick which crosses his chest and is hardly ever taken off.
[532]

c) Consecration of weapons

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411 A youth's childhood ends after the initiation. A whole new era opens up before him, an era of work and fighting and also of quite different pleasures from those of childhood. He is henceforth admitted to a place among warriors after these painful initiations the proof and marks of which are slashes cut into the back of his neck. Henceforth he may carry a gun; as a boy he had often tried to fire one so as to be ready when the time came. As a warrior with the right to fire it and to go to war, he must first "dedicate" the rifle to a spirit so that he may always shoot straight.

For an African all objects whatever they may be, have a life of their own; therefore, a rifle is a being. Alive with its own life, it will be dedicated to the spirit with the influence most favorable to it, that is, in the realm of space the sun, whose light and whose clear rays will enable it to hit the mark every time and will at the same time dissipate the shadows so that they will fail to conceal the enemy it is aimed at. The weapon will be dedicated to the sun and also to the clan's totemic guardian; in battle it is indeed important to be able to distinguish enemy from friend and not to run the risk of committing a totemic sacrilege. The rifle must be dedicated to both the totem and the sun.

However, it is worth noting that if nowadays a rifle is the only weapon to be dedicated, it is because it has become the

- 779 principal weapon and because there are very few Fan who do not
884 possess one. Actually, the word for "rifle" in the consecration
411 song mentioned below is sometimes nzali, which really means
"gun," and sometimes mbène, which denotes the "crossbow."
The crossbow used to be the Fan national weapon. One of the
words has changed, but the song is no less ancient for that.

In the middle of the village, the young man, accompanied
by an older friend, places his rifle so that the first rays of the
rising sun will strike it; he arranges around the rifle his totemic
fetishes, that is, his childhood totem, which he will hereafter
abandon, and his new warrior totem. In order to cast a spell
[533] [533] on his rifle, he then performs the necessary incantations,
among them a hymn or invocation to the sun, of such real
beauty and poetic quality that it should be quoted here.

Hymn to the Sun

539

Sun, you who see all things,
You, whose radiant splendor
Pierces the dark mist,
Sun, to you this homage!

To you, sun, king of the sky, divine hunter,
Sun, to you this homage!

Before your flashing glance
And the swift arrows of your fiery quiver,
Into somber depths
Fearful night sinks aghast,
Beneath your blows sparkling with light.
You tear night's mantle,
A black cloak trimmed with fire,
Sprinkled with bright stars,
You tear night's black mantle.

Sun, you who see all things,
You, whose radiant splendor
Pierces the dark mist,
Sun, to you this homage!

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533 When the required offerings have been made, before the rifle is lifted, the actual consecration takes place. The tune and words seem to me sufficiently remarkable to warrant quotation. This song, in its melody and structure, recalls the antique airs which have come down to us from the Greeks and Romans. It is always sung by several voices:

539 Song of the Rifle

Anthem: Oh, all of you, listen, listen to the song,
the song of the rifle!

Chorus: Oh, let us all listen, listen to the song,
the song of the rifle!

Solo: For you, alone, O rifle! for you alone,
Far into the woods,
Far, far have I tramped long in the forest,
No longer hearing the barking dogs,
No longer hearing them,
No more than the noise-loving cocks,
No more than the cocks,
Leaving behind the chattering women,
Leaving them in their dark huts. [534]

Refrain: Yes, for you alone, O my rifle!
For your sake only, into the woods,
Into the woods have I gone,
O my rifle, for you alone.

Anthem: All of you, come, listen to the song of the fetish,
The beloved song of the fetish!

Chorus: Let us all come, listen to the song of the rifle,
The beloved song of the rifle! (Refrain: Yes,
for you alone . . .)

Anthem: Come all of you, come, listen well and without noise,
Listen!

Chorus: And silently, heedfully, let us listen.

Solo: For you alone, O rifle! for you alone,
Deep in the woods,
Leaving the village behind,

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The young man is armed. He has undergone the initiation of the bawu and henceforth he has a right to speak in the council. He will not take advantage of this until the day he brings in the hand of an enemy he has killed and he is able to testify to his bravery in the presence of all by this striking proof of a daring exploit, yet often carried out by surprise.

[Pp. 535-536, 18 lines of music.] [537]

III. Consecration of the Chief

a) The ceremony

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A tribal chief has died. After the customary lamentation and funeral feast, he has been buried in a temporary grave. Thirty days afterwards the warriors again reassemble for the solemn funeral dance, the fanki. Then the eldest son, surrounded by leading warriors, opens his father's grave, climbs down beside the corpse, and with the consecrated knife detaches the skull, which will soon be added to the skulls of earlier ancestors in the évara biéri. Then the corpse is carefully replaced in the grave, and the totemic sacrifices are completed. We shall go back to these sacrifices when discussing individual mortuary rites. The eldest son or the heir removes the akaméyon or tribal totem, if he has not already done so. He then throws the earth back onto the corpse and everyone helps him in this dismal task, after he has thrown the first handfuls. All these rites belong to the social mortuary ceremonial.

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The new chief returns to the village. Then begins strictly speaking, the totemic rite of consecration, which takes place at night, without any female observers.

Escorted by all the warriors, to the beating of a tom-tom, the chief takes the évara biéri containing the ancestral skulls and carries it into the forest. The ceremony is secret only as regards women; young boys may be present.

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The box of skulls is put on a sort of platform made of newly cut poles. These must come from a special tree, the éfifira, and must all be alive and green. A bit of dead wood

779 would lead to a ritual offense. These branches are embedded
778 in the earth; they must also be straight, cut from the actual
622 trunk of the tree and not from a branch; upon these poles stuck
into the ground, the chief arranges pieces of bamboo (1) which

1. Bamboo is the usual term given by
analogy to the palm stems or raffia
used in all Fan building, in place of
real bamboo, which is unknown or a
recent importation into Gabon.

[342] make a platform. They are tied together, not with the lianas
[284] usual for huts, but with lashings [538] made of rattan palm.
When that work has been done, the chief places his évora biéri
on the upper tier; the other family heads put their bivora bibiér
to the right and left in order of precedence. When all the
boxes of skulls have been lined up, each man, after having
danced and sung around the altar, then approaches it again,
opens his box, removes the ancestral skulls, and places them
on the lower tier below the boxes. Upon his family skulls he
places the family totem, then his own personal totem. There
is another series of dances, accompanied by songs. The chief
then advances again, alone, and puts the skull of his immediate
ancestor above all the others, dances and sings, then puts the
skull inside that of the first ancestor. He also takes his family
totem, which by the very fact of his birth is the tribal or clan
totem, and places it upon the two superimposed skulls, his
father's and that of the clan father. Then there begins a special
533 song called the Song of Union. The archaic words are nowadays
622 for the most part very hard to understand, the general meaning,
779 on the other hand, is easy to grasp: it deals with the uniting
of all the heads of families in direct line and consists of an
invocation to the Spirit of the Race, who has passed down
through all descendants from the first ancestor so as to produce
a united and indivisible whole. The final words of the song
express this idea quite clearly:

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In you the last returns to the first,
The first returns to the last.
And in common accord,
Your breath that does not die reunites them all,
Your breath reunites them without ever wearying.

It makes an unending whole,
And future children, offspring of our race,
Will also be your children, O father!
As I today am your child.

The éfirfira grows and continues to grow.
New branches start from its gnarled trunk,
One after another,
They grow, yet remain always the éfirfira.

In you the last returns to the first,
The first returns to the last.

[539]

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A gelded goat or often a gelded dog is then brought to the wooden altar; it is immolated, and the blood is collected in a clay pot. The chief dips a green palm branch in the blood and then puts it on the altar in such a way as to cover both the totems and the ancestral skulls.

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After this first "recognition" comes a second, which consists of a song called "Song of the Visit." The chief sings it, and all the participants repeat the refrain. Thus the Yendun tribe, for instance, the refrain is:

[539]

Bi'ne bibône bi Ndun,
Bi'ne fogo bisésé bibône bi Ndun
Ndun a ne Esa bie,
Ndun ve Esa bie bisé.

We are the children of Ndun,
Yes, we are all the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is our father,
Yes, Ndun is the father of us all.

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622 At the same time, the chief has taken his father's and his first forefather's skulls; he approaches successively the évo biéri of each of the other heads of family and touches their ancestral skulls against those in his hands. He returns to the middle, takes the pot holding the victim's blood, dips his father's de, fly swatter, or into it, and then sprinkles the totems placed near the skulls. He takes his own totem, moves it along-side the clan or tribal totems, fastens them together with a liana and touches them successively against the totems of the other heads of family, while singing the totem song, everyone repeating the refrain after him:

[539]

We are the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is our totem (mvamayón),
Yes, we are the children of Ndun,
And Ndun is totem for us all.

After this ceremony there are several more dances and songs. Finally at the end, the tribal chief is the first to put the skulls back into the évo biéri, and everyone follows his example. He does the same thing with the totems, again followed by all the others. [540] All the boxes are then carefully put aside in a spot cleared in advance.

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All return to the open space. The rude altar, where the boxes, skulls, and totems had lain, is destroyed; the boxes are all heaped one upon the other; and great care is taken that no drop of the victim's blood that might have fallen on the ground be profaned by any touch at all. As soon as the victim itself has been immolated, it is laid on freshly cut green banana leaves -- it must never touch the ground -- and placed upon a pyre made from the altar wood, which is lighted. This task always falls to the new chief, never the practitioner. As soon as the victim has been cooked enough, it is put back on the banana leaves and cut up by the chief himself into as many pieces as there are persons present. No piece may be left over; no piece may be carried away. That would be a ritual offense of the gravest kind, and the Fan are convinced, or at least appear to be so, that the totem never fails to punish the wrongdoing by actual death of the

779 perpetrator. If necessary, the chief would take this upon him-
622 self. Such a case has sometimes occurred, according to certain legends.

The large bones are then again placed upon the pyre, for which the necessary wood has been carefully kept, because to cut or to add more is forbidden. When everything has been consumed, the bones and wood that are left in the form of cinders (1) are pulverized as finely as possible, and the chief

[137] 1. Efirira is a rather resinous wood, which burns up completely, leaving hardly any cinders.

scatters the powder on the recently covered grave of his father, accompanied by all the heads of family. The banana leaves that had been used to wrap up the victim are carefully folded into a bundle and thrown to the bottom of a spring or stream below the spot where water is usually drawn, so as to avoid profanation.

In contrast to all the other sacrifices, nothing must remain of this victim nor may anyone keep the slightest trace of it.

Before carrying the ashes of the sacrifice to his father's grave, the chief still has to go through another ceremony just as important, the rite of the spear.

779 The rite of the spear, or better of the assagais, ašume
622 mékôn, the salute to the assagais, only occurs at the enthronement of tribal chiefs and then only if they have come of age, 411 that is, have already been received as warriors bearing the marks or bawu.

779 b) The rite of the spear or the assagais. Ašume mékôn.
776 From the other side of Africa, Father Van den Burgt, (1)
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1. Dictionnaire français-rundi [French-Rundi Dictionary], article, "Kirâña."

of the White Fathers, recently pointed out a curious rite among the Barundi, the rite of the spear, the emblem of Kirâña, the

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second high spirit. Among the Fan, we have found the same emblem, consecrated to the spirit Ki-ndâna, he also being chief of the lower spirits, of material things, and thus master and chief of all beings on the earth. He is also invoked in time of war. This is the only information I have been able to obtain on the subject. But in comparing this fact with what we have seen among the Barundi, it certainly appears that a totemic rite is involved. Indeed among them, Imana, the Creator, is the lord of departed souls as, among the Fan, Nzame is also the Creator. Consequently he is foremost of all the ancestors and thus the keystone of the whole religious system. The Fan know this perfectly. When discussing genealogies I have already pointed out that a child or any warrior, when asked what his mébara is, will always end by invoking Nzame, saying: "And he (the first of the race) was created by Nzame, and before that I didn't belong to it, neither I nor anyone else." (Nge mur éto (the father of the race) Nzame émièn a nga bo ñe, ve 'sim ñi, mē mbe dia ve, ve ma, ve muramure.)

Among the Barundi the great rite of the spear consists of homage rendered to the sacred spear of Kirâna, the higher spirit of the Rundi triad, Imana, Ri-Kiramba, and Riangombi. Among the Fan, Kindâna does not belong to the divine triad, which they also recognize: Nzame, Mébère, Nkwa. Kindâna, lit., victorious Power, is chief of all beings under Nzame, and considered only as the principle of the power that animates everything and that is self-perpetuating. He is the opposite of inert matter. [542]

"The neighboring Pygmies," writes Mgr. Le Roy (1) in

1. Op. cit., p. 314.

connection with this Rundi rite, "have the same ceremony, which they appear to have originated." Perhaps, however, we ought to go further back to the very beginnings of the race, since we find the ceremony also among the Fan.

Among the Barundi the rite of the spear takes place in all critical situations. The usual form of that spear has one white and one black facet and it is said to bear the spirit Kirâna on its

779 point. At the time of the ceremony the guardian of the spear
776 appears with two assistants; he wears a sort of crown made of a
411 panther skin, part of which hangs down his back. The participants
171 form a semicircle around him, carrying small hollow calabashes
filled with hard seeds (2) that rattle. Then a hymn is begun,

2. The seeds of the annata tree are used
or, even more often, the round hard
seeds of canna (canna spec.).

sung in an oddly impressive tone, deeply convincing and creating
indescribable melancholy. During this evocation, each one
picks up a bit of straw, bows down and presents it to the sacred
spear, claps his hands together and asks the spirit dwelling on the
spearhead for various favors. He then says: "To thee, Father, I
make these demands, I offer my homage." Everyone then leaves
the hut singing and goes to the resting place of the ancestral
spirits.

779 Among the Fan the salute to the spear thus takes place at
622 the enthronement of the chief. After the victim has been divided
411 and eaten, the chief rises and plants his assagai in the earth, point
171 upwards; the point has been made to gleam by thorough careful
burnishing. The choice of spear is not unimportant: it must
have the totemic tribal emblem incised in its hollow and must
have already "drunk" enemy blood. The spear is thus planted
in the ground so far as possible just where the altar stood; shortly
after, at its foot, the chief places his baldrick usually of leopard-
skin, holding the materialized totem, the akaméyôñ. [543]

Having done this, he circles around the spear, singing, then
picks up the baldrick and hangs it upon the lance, which usually
has several small sharp hooks at the base.

The chief again circles the spear, sings a hymn in honor of
Kindāna, then stands still. All the others then go to fetch their
boxes of ancestral skulls and circle around the spear, singing.
As each man passes the chief, he bows, puts his box on the ground,
and claps his hands.

At the end of the ceremony the chief removes the spear, puts
back the baldrick at his side, and takes everything to his hut.

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He then returns to collect the remains of the sacrifice and carry them to his father's grave.

It is evident that the Fan ritual of the spear salute has many analogies to the Rundi ritual, and the same impulse would seem to motivate both.

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c) Rites of initiation and consecration of the chief compared with the religious role of the Pharaoh

In all this it is easy to see a whole embryonic system or rather, as our linguistic research bears out, the vestiges, very corrupt and gradually shriveling away, of a religious system that is very old and goes back to the very beginnings of the race.

The legends, customs, and especially the language make it possible for us to see, with all the reservations necessary to such a hypothesis, a pale reflection, perhaps a decadent reminder, of Egyptian religion.

It would be of great interest in the first place to try to find out if the Fan word denoting "chief," nzue -- from n for agency and zue, to command, to order -- is not related to Egyptian (ḥ), to pray, adore,

1. There are other resemblances between the two languages, to which I shall refer later: kha (Eg.), crown, and khu (Fg.), chief; khala, a fortified place, and dzal, fortified village (kraal); ka, to leave, and ka, to go away, etc.; ko, hook, and lko, hook, whence akōñ, hooked, barbed spear.

sua, to pray, adore, which was originally the chief's main function, or again to Suten, meaning "king," which comes from the word seten [544], to determine by knife, which means "to kill." The king is thus in theory he who slays the sacrificial victim, the sacrificer.

The Pharaoh formerly acted in a general way as a Fan chief still does today, without, one must admit, any of the trappings of majesty -- as I have said, he is a pale reflection.

He used to go himself, at least fictitiously, to capture the victim, a wild bull. He immolated it, cut it up, and offered it to the deity whose son he was. He was not only the sacrificer

648 Code to indigenous tribes, as has been decreed in Gabon, is one
622 of those governmental aberrations that reveals as profound an
ignorance as possible of the people to be governed and the
principles of government. [547]

For the same reasons, one can understand how impossible
it is to elect a chief outside the established rules of succession.
A chief appointed from outside the main lineage has not, and
cannot have, authority.

e) Change of clan totem

779 When, for the above reasons, authority have passed to
622 another clan family, the public cult remains the same. But it
644 must be emphasized as of the greatest importance that the
ancestral totem disappears, since it has no longer an eponymous
representative of its own blood. It will be replaced by the
family totem of the new chief, which then becomes the totem
for the whole tribe or clan. Far from being hypothetical, this
is, on the contrary, a repeated occurrence, of which the follow-
ing is a typical illustration.

A certain Mba-Alame, of the Yebiken or Banana clan,
left the tribe after a dispute with his clan chief and went to estab-
lish a village on a hill facing his old village. While remaining
on fairly good terms with the people of his former clan, his
first concern was to create a new family of his own and to cut
himself off distinctly from his former companions. He therefore
changed his name and took another, which happened to be Nzoge
Nze, Elephant-son-of the Panther. The panther became his
new totem and from then on, that of his sons and of the future
clan. He was in the full sense of the term, the new father of
the tribe, able to say more justifiably than Marshal Lefebvre
once did: "We are the forefathers!"

In order to undertake this sort of action, a man must have
a very resolute character, capable of breaking with his kin,
friends, and clan without fearing the always fatal reprisals.

Moreover, such a happening is only possible if the tribe is
small enough, because in a large tribe the chief would be very

719 unlikely to allow such a flouting of his authority. It is also
622 feasible if the chief is old and feeble, and the rebel held in
614 awe for his physical strength and especially his notorious bad
temper, based on substantial proof. Also the "deserter" or
[575] "uprooted" man must not belong to any secret "clan" society,
because the initiates never pardon [548] desertion, this is a
primary and always inviolable law.

And that is not all. It is imperative for the new founder to find a willing totem. The choice cannot be at random, as some people may imagine, and there must be a series of sacrifices during which the chosen animal indicates its acceptance. In such a case, the personal totem will receive this honor, for it cannot be changed and not to select it would be a gross insult that would unfailingly lead to significant revenge. But the personal totem must agree to become the tribal totem. In so doing, the spirit -- much more intelligent than man -- knows that it is agreeing to become his actual and titular guardian and it is not always anxious to do so. In similar circumstances, Nzoge Nze admitted to me one day that before finally acquiring an accepting totem he had had to wait for several months and to sacrifice a good many fowls and even kids. The practitioner also had to be satisfied.

It should be observed that following this acceptance all panthers did not become Nzoge Nze's totems, but only those who inhabited the country and were the offspring or descendants of his nze or particular totem panther. This proves the truth of our system. Furthermore, these panthers were sacred only to Nzoge Nze, for each particular totem is particular only to its owner, not to his next of kin. Thus, one of Nze's sons had the anteater, avil, for a totem: he was therefore not supposed to eat it, although his brothers and sons did so with impunity. But once Nzoge Nze's totem, nze, becomes the family and, therefore the tribal totem, his children will avoid killing any panther, on the chance that one might be related to that nze. However, should they happen to kill and eat one, the offense would be only hypothetical and before expiating it, they would make the

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 necessary investigation by sacrifices. And the totem, under penalty of not receiving any expiation, should reveal its relationship. But as Nzoge Nze becomes more of a remote ancestor, the risk of relationship with every panther grows, for each panther may be related to the eponymous ancestor and consequently the law becomes more stringent. Should a panther enter villages and kill a few innocent people, [549] such as women and children, The men of the eponymous clan would be permitted to kill it, and only in such a case, but they would still be forbidden to eat it. When after a series of sacrifices for this purpose, it has been duly established that revenge for some unexpiated totemic offense is not involved, that is proof that the panther in question does not belong to the eponymous panther clan. It is a "foreigner" or "deserter", the latter being quite common in certain animal species, one of whose members may leave the group to go off on his own and become a "solitary," as do elephants, panthers, wild boars, gorillas. It is then perfectly lawful to attack it and kill it if possible. A trifling ritual expiation will suffice, proportionate to the very small likelihood of having killed an ally, an extremely slight probability, since actions are never taken without previous assent of the totem chief of the tribe. The responsibility will be his in case of mistake.

IV. War and Palavers

511 Life is easy for the Fan.

Close to his village, the great forest begins; it abounds in game, and he has not far to go to be able to shoot, at point-blank range, monkeys, antelopes, wild boars, even elephants. There are innumerable streams and rivers swarming with fish, especially carp; traps, weirs, nets, everything is good to catch them with -- everything succeeds. A Fan hunts and fishes when he feels like it; there are no laws interfering with his inclinations. Bananas and manioc plantations, which provide the basic subsistence, give hardly any trouble. At the start of each season there are a few days of work at slashing-and-burning, the ashes providing fertilizer. After that, all the labor and care of the crops falls upon the women. The Fan is therefore idle most of the day and

517 from this comes about the endless palavers about everything and nothing, for lack of anything else to do.

721 However, if for one reason or another war threatens the tribe or has to be declared, the Fan then seems to awaken from his lethargy. Before the decision to fight, [550] there must be lengthy palavers. The totem has but a small part in these palavers, but no warrior would put in his word without having first taken his totem in hand and given it a brief scolding, often just one word, an exclamation, which only the most attentive would hear.

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637 When all the warriors have had their say, the chief rises and sums up everything that has been said, before beginning his own speech. During this report, he usually remains at his place. He then goes to the middle of the assembly, his chief's baton in his hand and across his chest the baldric from which the akaméyón always hangs. "I am so-and-so," he begins, "son of so-and-so, and my father was chief of the race. We are the sons of such-and-such totem, and our akaméyón protects us." After [20] these words, he stamps on the ground with his foot, or more often, with his baton, as if to testify to the truth of what he has said, and then gives his own opinion. When he has finished he holds up the tribal totem to bear witness to his words, then returns to his place.

● 779 If war is declared the totemic ceremonies are more pronounced. At first they will be nearly like those described for the initiation and consecration of the chief. The same altar is 721 put up in the forest with the same rites; wood of the éfirfira is 782 again used for construction. On the appointed day, all the warriors make their way into the forest, each head of a family carrying his évora biéri. The skulls are set out on the altar, and each totem at its place. The victim is then brought forward.

The scene at this point changes completely. Neither a dog nor a kid is immolated -- it must always be a man, either a prisoner of war or some captive bought back from a neighboring tribe. A woman may never replace a man. Nor may a man or child belonging to the tribe, nor one whose mother belonged either to the tribe or to an allied tribe, be used as victim; for

- 779 that would be against totemic law and would mean sacrilege.
 721 In order to avoid this ritual offense, which would necessitate ex-
 782 piation and would necessitate expiation and would furthermore
 wipe out all the efficacy of the sacrifice, the chief first of all
 approaches [551] the victim, and asks his name, race, and
 tribe. Is there no obstacle to the sacrifice? "A ne mvè," he
 cries, "a ne nwuba (he is good, he is 'dedicated')!" The man
 is then tied to the foot of the altar and very rarely does he re-
 sist. All Africans resign themselves to death with almost un-
 [76] conscious ease, when they see that it is inevitable. (1)

1. In certain villages I have sometimes met such men destined for sacrifice, be-
 cause they are often kept for many weeks. They walked around in the villages, ap-
 parently free, well fed, and well treated; the only sign of their captivity was a
 rather light block of wood well fastened to one of their feet, which they dragged
 along. Within the village this shackle was not much of an encumbrance, but in
 the forest it would have been an almost insurmountable obstacle to flight. Count-
 less times, I have offered either to help them escape or to have the colonial au-
 thority free them. "What for?" they used to reply; "I'm well fed and treated;
 death is going to come anyway. Awu nzu mbembè! (What's the use!)"

[276] So as to prevent any possible struggle, the evening before,
 779 the victim is given an intoxicating beverage, containing mostly
 721 the juice of ebè and of yam (hemp). As soon as he has been
 782 tied to the altar, and the chief has pronounced the ritual words,
 302 the warriors start putting on their war dress. First they paint
 386 their bodies red with baza (1) dye, and upon this first layer they

1. Pterocarpus angolensis: the wood is

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mashed and mixed with oil and produces
a splendid, very lasting red dye.

draw white horizontal lines with white clay (mfem). A wide black circle is traced around the eyes; on the forehead each one draws the likeness or symbol of his tribal or clan totem, or instead, they sometimes draw it on their temples or cheeks. Thus the "axe" of the Amvom, actually the likeness of a boa, their totem serpent, winds over their cheeks and temples and ends near the eyes. To enliven this image, the juice of a grassy lily, the chlorophyton (ayân é si), is used, which gives a long-lasting, blueish color. On the chest each one then draws his individual totem in black with gardenia juice.

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Once they have finished these preparations, the warriors pick up their weapons and fetishes and begin the war dance, which consists of two parts: a totemic dance and then the real war dance, [552] which has a stronger beat and is more lively. I have already described this before in connection with the war song, which here accompanies the dance.

After the war dance the chief approaches the victim. He is forced to his knees; the practitioner draws a white line on his neck, then violently pulls his head forward, while an assistant twists his arms behind his back. The practitioner cuts off his head at one quick blow with the sacrificial knife, and tosses it onto the altar. The chief collects the spouting blood in a pot kept for the purpose, a new pot which will afterwards be broken. As soon as the blood stops, the corpse is laid on fresh banana leaves and the practitioner, helped by the chief, opens his chest, taking care to use only two knife strokes: one across and one up and down. The heart is taken out and placed beside the skulls; then the lungs and liver are removed. According to the body's last twitching and the position of the organs, the practitioner predicts the outcome of the war. It will either be fortunate or cause the death of many warriors. "The funeral songs will last a long time," he may say, and the crowd will raise a cry of distress! If on the contrary the auguries are favorable, there will be shouts of joy, a song of triumph and gladness.

[787]

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● 779
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Everyone then comes near, the chief first, and dips a finger into the pot of blood and tastes it. The practitioner also dips in his finger and with it touches each warrior's totem to make the so-called racial mark (ndem ayón). "Adopted" warriors are excluded from this ceremony, perhaps the only occasion when a distinction is drawn between them and the tribe; in some smaller clans they are not excluded from this ceremony.

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When a tribe is populous and a single victim would not be enough, two, three, and sometimes ten or more are provided.

As soon as each warrior has thus "renewed the mark," the sacred dances start again. During that time the chief joins in at first, then takes what remains of the blood, smears his ancestral skulls with it, and then sprinkles the tribal totems while the warriors sing the totem song. [553] The practitioner, helped by his acolytes makes a kind of large sticky ball from the sap of certain rubber creepers (1) and a kind of gum, (2) and knead it inside

1. Landolphia Klaineana and
Thollonii of the Apocynaceae.

2. This gum is produced by the
Acacia erubescens Wildm. of
the acacia family.

the victim's thoracic cavity so that it becomes soaked with blood.
[787] At the end of the ceremony he takes a bit from this ball and applies it to each warrior's chest. According to how long it sticks, it will give an augury about the warrior's life, death, and the wounds he will receive.

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As soon as the ceremonies are completed the victims are cut into thin strips, and each person receives his share. The feast begins. This is the end of the actual totemic ceremony, to be followed from then on by purely religious and fetishist rites. I therefore need say no more on the subject.

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After the meal, the dance, and the songs, the skulls and totems are put back in the évora biéri and carried back to the huts.

B
608 songs celebrating the achievements of the tribe's forefathers
622 and teaching contempt for death.
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"Then comes the feast, from which women are strictly excluded."

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608 A ceremony identical to that of the Wabuyu is found
622 among the Ozem Fan, which I have seen several times, and is
almost the same among the Dzandzama and Bakélé.

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171 It is rather strange to find almost the same customs among
the most ancient peoples. For instance, Herodotus wrote of the
Scythians: "This is how the Scythians used to take an oath:
they would pour wine into a large earthenware cup, and the
parties to the oath would add their blood from slight cuts made
on their bodies with knife or sword; a boar-spear, an axe, and
a lance would then be dipped into the cup. They then recited
long prayers and drank from the cup. The leading members of
the court would drink after them." (1)

1. Herodotus, Book IV, Ch. 70.

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● 179 Blood alliance is the last general totemic rite that we
have to deal with. Next come particular rites. The totem
usually plays a far less important part in these than in general
rites, and we shall therefore be much less concerned with them.
[570]

Chapter XVI

The Totem in Fan Life: Particular Rites

Summary:

1. Birth.
2. Adoption.
3. Marriage.
4. Hunting, fishing, husbandry.
5. Trade and palavers.
6. Diseases and death. The funeral dance and the fanki.

553 arrival of a stranger. Hence, a certain number of names that at first would seem totemic, because they copy the names of animals and plants, are not so at all. In general, the eldest son's name is that of one of his forebears, a grandfather or ancestor, who is thought to come to life again in him. Twins, [845] however, always receive special names of matched things, which go in twos, like Sun and Moon, Wind and Rain, Storm and Thunder, etc.

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719 As soon as the child has been given a name, his father takes it in his arms and carries it into his hut, where he opens the Évora biéri and puts the baby down on the lid. He then takes the ancestral skulls one by one and puts them on the child's head, then places the family totem in its hand. The father with his fingernail often scrapes a bit off of the antelope horn holding the remnants of his personal totemic sacrifice, and puts some of this into the child's mouth. This, strictly speaking, is the dedication to the totem. The father then takes the baby back to its mother so that she may anoint it with oil and rub it with red wood. After the mother, or any other woman present, has attended to this, the father again takes the child and puts another bit of the totem into its mouth. A she-goat, a sheep, or at least a fowl is then offered to the family totem and to the spirits of the departed, according to sacred ritual. The remains [778] of this sacrifice, the ashes, etc., are enclosed in a small antelope horn, which is hung around the baby's neck or above his genital organs: this will be his amulet. Finally, the father gives the baby his personal totem, which will be recalled to him later on when he is old enough to understand. At that same time he will be taught what are the family, clan, and tribal totems, and the duties and obligations they impose on him. This instruction is part of the mébara. [572]

2. Adoption

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727 In certain cases, a few children are adopted by a head of the family when given as ransom for murder or spared in the

3. Marriage

● 119 I do not know of any truly totemic act among the com-
562 plicated religious rites connected with marriage. This absence
583 must come from the fact that women are considered to be in
themselves independent of the totem.

584 Before marriage, especially before starting to make the
119 rounds of the villages in order to pick out a future companion,
a young man first builds a sort of triumphal arch in front of
his hut. A creeper decorated with various bits of cheap finery,
fabric, green leaves, flowering branches, and ava flowers, is
stretched from his house to the one opposite, on the other side
of the public square or the main street of the village. Before
his hut two shrubs garnished in similar fashion have their tops
bound together to form a triumphal arch. The young man
opens the biéri box, removes his family totem and a skull and
puts them before the statue of the biéri. Then for hours, end-
less songs and dances will be performed. When the young man
is exhausted, one of his friends takes over. The songs and
dances last far into the night and start again at dawn. No one
may interrupt or even enter the hut, otherwise the entire cere-
mony would have to be begun all over again. A woman's
glance at the biéri or totem, or that of a strange man, would
be enough to bring this about. Therefore, one of the young
man's friends is constantly on guard to prevent such an accident;
he stands in front of the hut door and sees to it that people move
along briskly.

[583] This rite only takes place when a youth is contemplating
marriage by abduction. He wishes in this manner to gain the
good will of the biéri, the ancestors, and the totem.

[582] On the third day in the evening the ritual dances end.
The young man immediately offers a final sacrifice, usually
of a cock, a hen, and some maize, following the prescribed
forms. Then, since he is not permitted to rest for even a
moment, he starts out, carrying the cock, hen, and maize as
his only provisions; he is not allowed to take along anything
else.

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585 Whatever the kind of marriage, the first wife is the only one considered [574] as truly legitimate. As soon as she enters her new hut, her husband leads her by the hand before the évo biéri, which is kept tightly closed. Throughout her life, the wife will never be allowed to look into the box, as that would entail a very grave ritual offense. She now takes a bit of palm oil brought from her own village, mixes it with some from her husband's mother, and rubs this symbolic mixture on the statue on top of the évo. This is a symbol of the fertility she asks of the ancestors and the guardian spirits of the race. She next [782] puts a few grains of maize in a small basket at the base of the statue, so that her future plantations may thrive. This sacrifice should be repeated every morning, but only by the principal wife -- and it is often omitted.

4. Hunting, Fishing, Husbandry

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779 Before starting on a hunting or fishing expedition, likewise before going out to the first work on his plantation, every family head or warrior will be sure to invoke his totem. He does this first with an offering on the biéri box, then by touching his weapons, tools, or snares against the family totem.

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779 In the case of hunting, the hunter, when charing his gun, mixes some of the ashes of totemic sacrifice with his small shot, puts his hand on his totem, and leaves confident of the outcome. Even if hunting does not come up to expectation, he would never dream of blaming his totem. He would think that he had had bad luck or, more likely, that he had committed some offense.

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779 When going fishing, he carries some of the sacrificial ashes hidden in a rag. At the spot he thinks propitious, he always begins by throwing the ashes into the water, in order to obtain his totem's good will.

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779 Likewise, when a man starts farming, at the beginning of each dry season, before giving the first ax blow to the trees to be cut down, he places some ashes or remnants of sacrifice in some kind of hole and sees to it that they are consumed by the

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241 fire which he sets to the felled trees so as to make the necessary
fertilizer needed for his future crops. [575]

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779 Returning from hunting or fishing, a man is always sure to
put an offering on the évora biéri: it may be a piece of the ani-
mal's heart and brain or part of the first fish caught, even the
whole fish if it is very small. The first fruits are also placed on
the évora. Any infraction of these rites leads to punishment that
can only be atoned for by one or more sacrifices. A warrior will
infallibly recognize punishment in the failure of hunting or fish-
ing trips or in barren plantations.

The hunting or fishing offering is made by the head of the
family, that of first fruits by the first wife.

5. Trade and Palavers

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779 Whenever a Fan has to "talk," he is very careful to try
to gain his totem's good will beforehand. On such occasions
it is important that he be able to convince his fellow speakers
or his adversaries.

The totem ceremony is very short. Before leaving for
the palaver or on a trading trip, he removes from the biéri box
some of the ashes of the last sacrifice and puts them into a rag,
closes the box, and goes off contented.

Before beginning to "talk," he will open the package of
ashes and put a bit on his forehead, lips, and throat. Thus the
spiritual guardians of the race will aid his brain and inspire him
with the best thoughts and the best phrases, and thus they will
tell him the best words to use to convince his adversaries and
obtain what he wants.

6. Disease and Death

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779 The totemic ceremonies connected with disease and death
are of somewhat more consequence. As soon as a man falls
gravely ill, the practitioner is called in. He demands in advance,
to be on the safe side, the proper payment for his pains, and then

755 goes to the sick man's hut. A variety of remedies are used,
• 779 among them always a dance in honor of the totem. After the dance and the driving out of the evil spirits [576] that torment the sick man, a sacrifice is made, often of a she-goat, a sheep, or at least a fowl. The sick man always has to eat some of this sacrifice, and the practitioner mixes into it fragments of the patient's family totem, as he does into any potions administered. If the sick man recovers, he will have to offer a black hen on the évora biéri before he leaves his hut. The hen will then be burnt according to the sacred rituals.

764 If the man dies, his eldest son closes his eyes and
779 straightens the arms and legs before they become stiff, after which the corpse may not be touched, under grave penalties. The lamentations begin, but in an undertone; the dead man's wives gather around him, tear at their arms and legs, and with the blood that flows sprinkle the corpse. He is then covered with his fetishes and at his side is the mébut on which his family totem is hung. After the first lamentations are over, the commotion quiets down and only the dead man's wives continue to weep.

In the morning the eldest son and heir offers a sacrifice to the deceased's family totem so that it may continue to favor the survivors. He puts some of the victim's blood into the mouth of the corpse and also takes some in his own mouth. He then completes the sacrifice according to the customary rites.

Before the burial another sacrifice will be made in order to determine the location of the grave and to make sure that the dead man is satisfied. The corpse is made to partake of this sacrifice too.

At the appropriate time, the dead man is placed in the grave dug for him; his family totem lies beside him, and, if he is a tribal chief, the clan or tribal totem is also placed at his side. This is left to him for a few moments, then the heir removes it, so as to "take possession."

765 The same ceremonies are observed when the skull is re-
779 moved, 30 days after death.

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● 779 This skull cannot, however, be put into the évora biéri right away, it must first be "acknowledged." The rite is analogous to that of the chief's initiation, which has already been described. The skull [577] is carried into the forest, placed upon a kind of altar, and a victim is immolated in its honor. It is sprinkled with lustral water, then with blood. The chief's heir then takes the skull and makes it first "acknowledge" the ancestral skulls, then successively the family and clan totems, and ends with the tribal totem.

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779 Thirty days after death the funeral dances or fanki also take place, and then the division of the deceased's property, particularly his wives. His hut usually stays closed throughout this time, with the door barred and the roof covered with thorns so that the deceased's spirit cannot re-enter the house, which would mean making further sacrifices.

The mortuary rites are very complicated and very solemn among the Fan, especially for an important chief. I have here referred only to totemic rites. The totem will live again later in the person of one of the descendants, usually the grandson, [55] who, in many cases, will have both the name and the totem of his grandfather.

[p. 578-653 not translated]